

Unit 7b: Orthodox and Roman Catholic Texts--Societal Implications

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will

Be aware of the following

- Serbian Orthodox fusion of church-state understanding
- Impact of Serbian Orthodox monasteries as repositories of Serb literature and culture
- Greek mission efforts instrumental in converting many Slavs to Christianity
- Positive influence of Roman Catholic priests in formulation of Croatian language and culture
- Impassioned, emotion-laden rhetoric so often characterizing discussions of the 1991-1995 war in the former Yugoslavia

Identify

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Macedonian Orthodox Church | • Liturgy |
| • Ban Kulin | • Relic |
| • Patriarch Pavle | • Canonization |
| • Radovan Karadzic | • Slava |
| • Hermit | • Archbishop Stepinac |
| • Monastic communities | • Counter-Reformation |
| • Cyril and Methodius | |
| • Pope John Paul II | |

Realize

- Marshal Tito's role in establishing the Macedonian Orthodox church in 1958
- Controversial nature of church-state roles in Serbia and Macedonia

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This unit focuses on Orthodox and Roman Catholic thought and practice as applied to society and politics of Central/South Central Europe (SCE). It addresses selected aspects of church/state relations, monastic communities, mission emphasis and saints. The final section treats the question in what way the current conflict is a "religious war."

1. Orthodox Practice

a. Church/state relations While historic United States policy sees a clear and distinct line between church and state, other areas of the world often have no such clear demarcation.



Orthodoxy, especially as practiced in Serbia and Macedonia, fuses together the two. To be religious is to be politically involved. Citizenship and church identity go hand in hand. Even if a person seldom attends divine services, yet holds to the Orthodox faith, he or she consider themselves devoted followers and good citizens.

History of the SCE region demonstrates this church-state affinity. Though not officially recognized as a legitimate body, Marshal Tito helped establish Macedonia's Orthodox Church in 1958. So close was the church-state association that atheistic Yugoslav Communists sought to weaken the power of the Serbian Orthodox church and give credibility to the newly established "Macedonian" nation by supporting Macedonian Orthodox autonomy.

Church leaders, from Ban Kulin, the twelfth century Bosnian leader who embraced Bogomil thought for a time, to current Serbia's Patriarch Pavle, often become embroiled in controversy resulting from a close identification with the state.

Indicted war criminal, former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadzic (rah-DOH-vahn KAHR-ah-jeech), is called by some Orthodox "St. Karadzic," and seen to be a good and decent man.



A 1995 issue of Svetigora, the official Serbian Orthodox publication of the diocese of Montenegro, featured Karadzic in company with the patriarchs of Moscow and Belgrade. The accompanying interview related how Karadzic "*claims the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit in all his political decision and urges the political involvement of the Orthodox Church in the life of Serbians everywhere.*" (Paul Mojzes, "The Pro-Serb Montenegrins," Christian Century, 13 Dec 1995, p. 1205).

b. Monasteries Monks and nuns separate themselves from worldly concerns and devote their lives to contemplation and service of God. The strong Orthodox monastic tradition allows each monastic community to set its own rules.

Both individual (hermits) and communal monastic forms are prevalent. A contemplative life of prayer and study for monks and nuns--rather than orders of service (like Mother Teresa's Sister's of Charity)--is the Orthodox aim.



Monasteries in the Serbian Orthodox tradition over time became repositories of Serbian literature and culture. Some go so far as to say "It is in the monasteries that the identity of the Serbian nation has been forged, nurtured and zealously guarded." (Chris Hedges, New York Times, 10 Nov 1997, p. A4).

Monasteries preserve some of SCE's most treasured frescos, paintings, statues and architecture. In the most recent conflict, religious monuments and monasteries became prime targets for bombs, artillery projectiles and overall destruction.



c. Missions In the ninth century, the Greek brothers Cyril (SIHR-ahl) and Methodius (mah-THOO-dee-ahs) were instrumental in converting many Slavs to Orthodox Christianity. These brothers helped create the Glagolitic (glag-ah-LIHT-ihk) alphabet, a forerunner of Cyrillic. Historically, missionary activity received great emphasis in the Orthodox tradition. Currently, few well-known mission activities worldwide occur.

d. Saints Identified persons, who are treated with reverence and awe by means of a liturgy (a ritual of public worship), are saints. Canonization is the process by which churches recognize which persons become such venerated individuals. Saints become models of the Christian life and are intercessors for the faithful's prayers. Shrines, which may hold the remains of saints (relics), are also held in high regard.

Feasts (slava, "slah-vah") held in honor of patron saints become occasions of great ceremony and celebration. Within Serbia and Macedonia, families all have their own identified saints. Some anthropologists see saint veneration in the SCE as a continuation of ancient pagan rites and festivities.



2. Roman Catholic Thought and Practice

a. Church/state relations The influential text Religion and Politics describes relations between Tito's Communist state and the Roman Catholic Church. "Peaceful coexistence" identifies practice since the death of Archbishop Stepinac in 1960. The following post 1960 events indicate the uneasy state of relations between Catholic and nationalistic leadership.

(1) Re-establishment of diplomatic relations In 1970, the Vatican and Yugoslavia's government re-established channels for dialogue and recognition. Marshal Tito visited with Pope Paul VI in 1971.

(2) Nationalistic sentiments In the 1980s, Roman Catholic Cardinal Franjo Kuharic (frah-n-yo koo-hahr-eets) supported the rehabilitation of Cardinal Stepinac. This support, combined with (a) church contacts with Croatians abroad, (b) apparent approval of antigovernment demonstrations on Christmas Eve, 1984, and (c) the growth of a dissident movement--due in part to economics--supported by a number of priests and lay activists, increased tensions.

(3) Human rights issues Assertiveness by Catholic hierarchy to human rights issues also surfaced in the 1980s.

In 1980, Archbishop Jozef Pogačnik (yo-zeh po-gahts-neek) of Ljubljana (lyoo-blyah-nah) and a number of Catholic intellectuals demanded release of all political prisoners. In 1982, theologians at Zagreb University held an international conference on human rights, despite government opposition. The Church responded decisively to false criminal proceedings against Slovene priests and monks in the late 1980s. The state answered with repressive measures.



(4) Current realities The Croatian constitution provides freedom of religion.

According to the U.S. State Department Report on Religious Freedom, *"Religion as a reflection of ethnicity...is often used to identify non-Croat, particularly Serbs and Bosniaks, who experience discrimination in citizenship, employment, administration of justice, and housing. The close identification of religion with ethnicity sometimes causes religious institutions to become targets of violence...a Catholic church in Eastern Slavonia was attacked by a Serb mob during its Christmas services, which were attended by a group of ethnic Croats."*

In Bosnia, Catholic Cardinal Vinko Puljic (veen-ko pool-yeets) advocates an independent, multicultural Bosnia, where Muslims, Catholics, Orthodox and Jewish citizens alike can live together. According to news reports in the Christian Century (28 Feb 1996), Cardinal Puljic receives widespread support from many religious factions in Sarajevo.

b. Monasteries



Throughout the former Yugoslavia, Roman Catholic monasteries historically served as oasis of culture. They often preserved Slovenian and Croatian ways of life in the midst of invasions, movements of people and unrest. As mentioned in previous units, the work of educated Catholic priests served to solidify language, initiate and preserve scholarship, and educate the everyday citizen.

In Dalmatia, Roman Catholic Franciscan, Dominican and Benedictine orders continue to leave their impact through schools, libraries and archives. In Albania under Ottoman rule and prior to World War II, Franciscans and Jesuits ran schools. They often took an active role in ending feuds and disturbances among

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the people, based in part on the belief by citizenry that they were sent by the Pope and had authority to bestow or take away God's generational blessings on families.

c. Missions Events during the Counter-Reformation (the movement within the Catholic Church following the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century) significantly enhanced cultural development in Croatia. Jesuit priests--often serving as missionaries to the Croatian peoples--founded schools, and helped shape the Croatian literary heritage through published grammars, a dictionary and religious books.

d. Saints Feast days to saints, accompanied by bonfires and village processions, are occasions for festivity and celebration in many parts of Croatian society. St. George's and St. John's Days become, along with other remembrances, rituals to protect people, fields and cattle as well as promoting fertility.

3. The 1991-1995 Conflict--A Religious War?

Impassioned, emotion-laden rhetoric can characterize discussions concerning roots of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Fear, hatred, bigotry and ignorance project superficial analysis and one sided responses. Causes of the war cannot be reduced to simplistic causes.



This section surveys three responses to the "Religious War?" question--(1) religion as fuel for passions; (2) religious leaders who condemn the war; and (3) religion as healing balm for reconciliation. Throughout, the tempered analysis of Paul Mojzes is instructive. In his book Yugoslavian Inferno, this religious studies teacher at Rosemont College in Pennsylvania argues that...

"the concrete historical embodiments of religions in the Balkans did contribute religious traits to the present [1994] warfare, usually in combination with ethnic and other aspects. While not every religious person or leader there is implicated in barbaric behavior, the regretful fact is that many individuals and groups have sanctioned and 'sanctified' these wars" (p. 126).

a. Religion as fuel for passions Professor Samuel Huntington, in his controversial but insightful book, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, argues, in part, that the religious dimensions of the conflict play a great part in the ethnic strife.

Croatians saw themselves as guardians of Western values against intrusions of Orthodox and Islamic faith and practice. Serbs identified their enemies as "the Vatican," "Islamic fundamentalists," and "infamous Turks" who have threatened Christianity throughout history.



Bosniaks saw themselves as victims of genocide, ignored because of their religion and deserving of Muslim world support. The struggle became defined by three faiths--Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam. Writes Huntington, "All the parties to, and most outside observers of, the Yugoslav wars thus came to see them as religious and ethnoreligious wars" (p. 271).

Paul Mojzes amplifies this "religion as fuel for passion" argument. In a 4 Nov 1992 article entitled "The Reign of 'Ethnos': Who's to Blame in Yugoslavia?" (Christian Century), Mojzes writes that people who had only a nominal interest in their faith would become hardened--making absurd and offensive charges against other faiths.

"Thus the war has become a religious war, espoused by people with only the vaguest notions of their religion and fought by people with practically no moral restraints imposed by their religions" (p. 97).

b. Religious leaders who condemn the war



Patriarch Paul I of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Cardinal Franjo Kuharic of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference held a series of meetings during 1991-1992 in Serbia, Croatia, and Switzerland. Out of the 1992 Geneva meeting came a straightforward statement. The appeal, based upon their spiritual position and moral responsibility, demanded

- (1) an immediate cessation of all hostilities, bloodshed and destruction;
- (2) liberation of all prisoners of war, hostages, and those incarcerated during the war;
- (3) cessation of ethnic cleansing;
- (4) return of refugees and deportees, with free access to their people by respective religious leaders;
- (5) that normal communications and possibilities for free movement/settlement of peoples begin; and
- (6) that the suffering receive undisturbed and equal access to humanitarian aid.

In 1995, Zagreb's Roman Catholic Cardinal Franjo Kuharic, in a letter to Bosnian and Croatian leadership, further denounced extremists and Croatian nationalists who were intent on creating ethnically homogeneous Bosnian Croat areas.

The World Council of Churches' Commission of Churches on International Affairs--Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation, stated *"The civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was, is and remains an abomination against all that is good, true and beautiful. It is the triumph of fear and hatred over love and justice, of bigotry and ignorance over cooperation and understanding, of power and realpolitick over reason and morality"* (Tragedy of Bosnia, p. 43).



Yet, in spite of these unified religious pronouncements, no one leader *"has emerged with a Christlike, Ghandian, or Martin Luther King, Jr. type of strategy for resisting evil"* (Yugoslavian Inferno, p. 149).

c. Religion as healing balm for reconciliation

On 13 April 1997, Pope John Paul II visited Sarajevo, where he met with 35,000 worshipers gathered in Kosevo (KOH-seh-voh) stadium to celebrate mass. As part of his historic visit, the Pope met with religious leaders of Bosnia's major factions, offering all the message of reconciliation and forgiveness.

The World Council of Churches' Commission of the Churches on International Affairs also challenges the religious communities of this war torn region. *"If peace does finally come to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the work of the churches will have only begun. Fear, anger and mourning will have to be replaced by healing, reconciliation and reconstruction"* (Tragedy of Bosnia, p. 9).

Vocabulary List: Orthodox and Roman Catholic Texts: Societal Implications

Ban Kulin (1180-1204) 12th century Bosnian noble/leader who embraced Bogomil thought for a time then recanted under torture.

Canonization Process by which Catholic or Orthodox churches infuse sainthood on a person

Counter-Reformation Movement for reform and entrenchment within the Roman Catholic Church following the 16th century Protestant Reformation

Cyril and Methodius 9th century Greek brothers who served as missionaries to bring many Slavs to the Orthodox faith. They helped create the Glagolitic alphabet, a forerunner of Cyrillic.

Hermit Person who lives a solitary, withdrawn life due to religious persuasion

Karadzic, Radovan (KAHR-ah-jeech, rah-DOH-vahn) Former Bosnian Serb president, convicted war criminal, and leader who still influences Bosnian politics.

Liturgy Set form of public worship or ritual

Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) Orthodox Church in Macedonia, not officially recognized within worldwide Orthodox circles due to its suspect origins. In 1958, Marshal Tito sought to reduce Serbian Orthodox power and promote the Macedonian autonomy through establishment of the MOC.

Monastic communities Gatherings of monks or nuns who separate themselves from society at large to devote themselves to contemplation and service of God.

Patriarch Pavle Current head of the Serbian Orthodox Church

Pope John Paul II Current Roman Catholic Pope who visited Sarajevo in April 1997, gathering worshippers together to celebrate mass. Reconciliation and forgiveness were the themes of his homily.

Relic Surviving memorial, fragments, souvenir, or memento of a saint, martyr or sacred person

Slava (slah-vah) Feasts held in honor of patron Orthodox saints

Stepinac, Archbishop Alojzije Roman Catholic archbishop of Zagreb who was arrested and tried by the Tito government in 1946. Partially out of retribution for wartime atrocities, the arrest, imprisonment and eventual rehabilitation (at his death in 1961) of Stepinac focused the uneasy state of relations between the Tito government and the Roman Catholic Church.



"Let off some steam."

Review Quiz: Orthodox and Roman Catholic Texts- Societal Implications



Part 1--Fill in the blanks Fill in the blanks with the most correct word immediately following this section. Not all words listed will be used.

(1)_____ is the process whereby a person is made a saint. Saints are often venerated (respected and revered) through a (2)_____ said in their honor. At times, their remains or (3)_____ are honored in shrines. Feasts held in honor of patron saints, called (4)_____, are times of ceremony and celebration.

The uneasy church-state tension within the Balkans is seen in the respect some Serbian Orthodox followers give (5)_____. Also many view the formation of the (6)_____ Orthodox Church by Marshal Tito as a political, pragmatic opportunity with little religious underpinning.

The current leader of Serbia's Orthodox Church is Patriarch (7)_____. (8)_____, a 12th century Bosnian leader, embraced Bogomil thought for a time.

(9)_____ and Methodius, two Greek Orthodox missionaries, did much to convert the Slavs to Christianity.

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(10) _____ communities often serve as repositories of Orthodox and Roman Catholic culture.

Ban Kulin	Cyril	Pavle	Monasteries
Liturgy	relic	Slava	Macedonian
Canonization	Radovan Karadzic		



Part 2--Multiple Choice

Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.

1. _____ For many Orthodox Eastern Serbs, one is a devoted follower
 - a. only if you attend divine services every week.
 - b. even if you seldom attend divine services.
 - c. if a citizen of Serbia.
2. _____ Most Serbian Orthodox monasteries are dedicated to
 - a. a contemplative life of prayer and study.
 - b. a rigorous life of service to the outside world.
 - c. promote nationalistic principles.
3. _____ Historically, some of SCE's most beautiful paintings, art and architecture was found in
 - a. universities and libraries.
 - b. monasteries and churches.
 - c. state-financed diplomat homes.
4. _____ Slava celebrations, honoring patron saints, within Serbia and Macedonia are mainly
 - a. nationwide holidays.
 - b. family celebrations.
 - c. hermit liturgies.

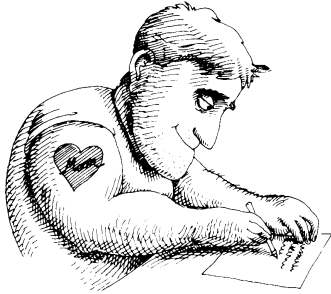
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5. _____ A key figure in Tito's relationship with the Roman Catholic Church is
- a. Patriarch Pavle.
 - b. Vlade Divac.
 - c. Archbishop Stepinac.
6. _____ The current Bosnian cardinal, Vinko Puljic, advocates
- a. separate Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish settlements within Bosnia.
 - b. an independent, multi-cultural Bosnia.
 - c. a state supported Catholic Church in Bosnia.
7. _____ In Albania prior to World War II, Roman Catholic Franciscan and Jesuit orders
- a. ran schools and settled feuds.
 - b. retreated into Croatia because of all the clan rivalry.
 - c. had little impact on culture and society.
8. _____ Much popular discussion concerning the religious nature of the 1991-1995 SCE conflict is
- a. narrowed, thoughtful analysis.
 - b. impassioned, emotion-laden and heavily biased.
 - c. nonexistent as religion doesn't interfere with nationalistic identity.
9. _____ Paul Mojzes, in his book Yugoslavian Inferno argues
- a. for the complete religious nature of the 1992-1995 conflict.
 - b. that religion, ethnic and other aspects of culture all played a role in the 1992-1995 war.
 - c. that religion played only a minor role in the 1992-1995 conflict.
10. _____ Professor Samuel Huntington argues that, throughout the world _____ dimensions of cultures play a great part in ethnic strife.
- a. economic
 - b. religious
 - c. artistic

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Weingartner, Erich ed. Tragedy of Bosnia. New York: Commission of Churches on International Affairs, Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation, World Council of Churches, 1994.



Resources for Further Study

Christian Century. "Muslims, Christians issue appeal in Bosnia." 7-14 Jan 1998, pp. 11-12.

Mojzes, Paul. Religion and the War in Bosnia. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press 1998.

Seventeen scholars, from a wide variety of perspectives-- Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and secular-- examine the role of religion in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



"It is not the dangerous days of battle which most strongly test the soldier's resolution, but the years of peace, when many voices offering many counsels, bewilder and confound him [her]."

General Matthew Ridgway